

(c) and (d) The Commission has, *inter-alia*, referred to a drop in public and private investment in Agriculture Sector. It is the constant endeavour of the Government to increase the allocation to agriculture sector and promote private investment in the sector. The State Governments have also been requested to suitably enhance allocation of the farm sector.

Per-acre yield of rice

256. SHRI S.S. AHLUWALIA: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Indian ranks second in terms of the volume of the rice produced but ranks sixteenth in terms of yield of the crop per-acre;

(b) the reasons for low yield of the crop per-acre; and

(c) the details of steps being contemplated, if any, to improve the scenario indicating the time-frame thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI KANTI LAL BHURIA): (a) As per statistics on production and yield on the website of Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) for the year 2004 (corresponding to agriculture year 2003-04 in case of India), India ranks 2nd in terms of the rice produced and ranks 14th in terms of yield per hectare.

(b) The main reasons for low yield per hectare of the crop, among others, are predominant rainfed conditions, low seed replacement ration and short maturity periods.

(c) In order to increase production and productivity, the Central Government has been implementing Integrated Cereals Development Programme (ICDP) in Rice Based Cropping Systems Areas. The scheme is implemented on 90:10 sharing basis between Government of India (GoI) and the States. Under the scheme, assistance is provided for propagation of improved production technology, hybrid rice production technology, integrated pest management through field demonstrations; training of farmers including women; transfer of technology through electronic media and published literature; farm implements; installation of sprinkler irrigation system; varietal replacement and production of certified seeds. Frontline

Demonstrations are also organized by the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) on farmer's fields on 100 percent GoI assistance.

Change in Guidelines for assistance to drought hit States

†257. DR. PRABHA THAKUR:

SHRI JAI PRAKASH AGGARWAL:

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have brought about changes in the existing guidelines for one-time waiver for one year on interest payment for kharif crops to increase the ceiling of agriculture investment subsidy and to provide additional assistance to provide relief to drought hit States;

(b) if so, the complete details of guidelines issued by the Centre; and

(c) the details of the assistance schemes and credit schemes provide/ proposed to be provided by Central Government to the farmers of drought hit States particularly Rajasthan?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI KANTI LAL BHURIA): (a) to (c) The guidelines on One-Time Settlement (OTS) of loans including waiver on interest is framed by the Reserve Bank of India. Reserve Bank of India revises these guidelines from time to time for providing relief to the needy farmers. There are laid down items and norms of expenditure for assistance from relief funds in the wake of natural calamities including drought i.e. from Calamity Relief Fund (CRF) and National Calamity Contingency Fund (NCCF). As per the existing guidelines, assistance is admissible to small and marginal farmers for crop loss of 50% and above at the rate of Rs. 1000/- per hectare for rainfed areas, Rs. 2500/- per hectare for irrigated areas and Rs. 4000/- per hectare for perennial crops. Assistance is also admissible to other farmers in case of severe calamity occurring for second consecutive year (or subsequent year) and subject to the condition that the subsidy will be payable at appropriate rate per hectare upto 2 hectares only, irrespective of the size of holding. The matter regarding revision of norms is still under finalisation.

The Government of India announced a comprehensive credit policy on 18th June, 2004, containing measures for doubling of agriculture credit

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.